

shopping on healthcare.gov and get some tax credit help to help afford coverage.

Here is what happened to Kathy in December. She had heart pains. She thought she was having a heart attack. She went to the emergency room of one of our great local hospitals. Thank goodness, she did not have a heart attack.

Kathy almost had a heart attack, however, when she got the hospital bill later. The hospital bill was \$70,000. That would bankrupt her. Fortunately, she had coverage through the Affordable Care Act at healthcare.gov, and ultimately what she paid on that hospital bill was only \$179.

This story is repeated over and over again, and I simply do not understand why my Republican colleagues think it is wise to make coverage unaffordable and increase cost on all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, the other part of this bill that is kind of flying under the radar, but is quite insidious and rather unconscionable is the hatchet it takes to the 50-year guarantee that is provided to Americans under Medicaid.

Medicaid serves our neighbors with Alzheimer's. It pays about two-thirds of the cost of long-term care and skilled nursing, the cost of care for the disabled, many children, many pregnant women. It has been the law for about 50 years to ensure that, in the United States of America, if you have a child born with a complex medical condition or you have a parent or grandparent that has to go into a nursing home, that your family is not going to be impoverished. That is a valued decision we made 50 years ago.

In this bill, the Republican leadership intends to go back on our values and pull the rug out from under our families who rely on Medicaid services. They say: Oh, the States will be able to do this. The States will have all the flexibility in the world.

Well, flexibility is a canard for they are going to have less, and we are going to ration care.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican colleagues to pull this bill, to build on affordable coverage, to build on the cost savings that we have made and the progress we have made for these families.

□ 1100

#### HEALTH CARE OUGHT TO BE A RIGHT AND NOT A PRIVILEGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to once again express my opposition to the repeal-and-replace healthcare bill before us.

You know, it is my position that health care ought to be a right and not a privilege, especially in a country where we have the skill, the knowledge, and the technology to provide it.

Medicare and Medicaid opened up new opportunities for health care for seniors and large numbers of low-income, poor people in this country in the mid-1960s. As a matter of fact, before Medicaid and Medicare, some of them had never ever been able to acquire any professional medical help. As a matter of fact, they lived off remedies and concoctions and things that they had learned how to put together.

Now we come along with some help—Medicare, Medicaid—and the next big move was the Affordable Care Act, which was a long time coming, but it helped us move to the point where more than 20 million people were able to get health insurance who had never had it before, whose only outlet was to go to the emergency room of public hospitals and oftentimes sit sometimes for 2 or 3 days before they got service, before they got attention.

Now, here we come with something talking about repealing it, taking it away. How could we possibly want to go backwards, back to where millions of people are wondering every day whether or not they are going to be able to go to the doctor and get serviced if they are sick?

And so I say to my colleagues, especially those who have never had the experience of knowing hundreds of people with no care like I have, let's say: No, no, no. Forward ever, backwards never.

#### DON'T WALK THE PLANK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, it was 7 years ago today that the Affordable Care Act passed and changed the lives of so many millions of Americans who previously couldn't get health care. But I think we knew even at the time that a big bill like this, a transformative piece of legislation like this, over time would require some changes, just as Social Security and Medicare have done.

The truth of the matter is, for 7 years, as we heard Republicans complaining about what was happening, we said: Let's sit down together, as Members of Congress, representatives of the people, and fix what we have got and build on the things that have made it possible for all these millions of people to have not only health care, but better health care.

Instead, what we heard over and over again is: Repeal ObamaCare; repeal ObamaCare. And I kind of feel like today what we have is, because they said that, then they feel like they have to fulfill a promise. But if you look at what they are offering, it really hurts so many Americans.

What I hope the American people will understand is that the so-called repeal-and-replace bill raises the cost of premiums and out-of-pocket costs. People are going to pay more and get less.

Twenty-four million people—that is just a start; it ends up being some 50

million people after some years—will lose their coverage altogether.

It represents the single largest transfer of wealth to the top richest Americans and corporations. We are talking about \$600 billion in tax relief. There is not a lot of talk about that. In many ways, this is a tax cut for the richest being masked as a healthcare bill.

Finally, I want to really focus in on what we call the age tax. Well, before I was a senior citizen myself, I have worked with older Americans in the State of Illinois, where I am from, and here in Congress as well.

So what is this age tax? This bill says that people who are between the age of 50—not very old—and 64, in other words, pre-Medicare, will be allowed to be charged five times more than young people for their health care. Actually, it allows the States even to go more than five times more for their health care. It will lower the subsidies.

As has been said many times, here is just an example. If you are 64 years old with an income of around \$26,500—which, by the way, is the median income for people that age, certainly not a wealthy person—you would pay, under this bill, the Republican bill, \$14,600 for premiums—think of that—as compared to \$1,700 today, an increase of \$12,900. So it is not surprising that the Congressional Budget Office predicts that many of those people will simply have to give up their health care.

The reason they want to charge them more is to entice younger people, who will then pay lower premiums, to actually get on the program. We are all for that. We want to make sure that young people get on. But people who are 50 to 64 are very likely, or more likely than young people, to have healthcare issues.

It is absolutely no wonder that so many organizations and forces are lining up in the United States to oppose this bill:

The American Medical Association, the doctors, and all the different subgroups of doctors, have written letters saying no to this repeal-and-replace.

The American Hospital Association, not only urban hospitals and hospitals in medically underserved areas, rural hospitals could go under.

The AARP, 35 million members strong, is absolutely dead set—they are running ads; some people may have seen them on television—against this legislation.

The American Nurses Association, conservative think tanks are against it, and many Members of Congress are against it—and for good reason. One of our Republican Senators said to House Republicans: Don't walk the plank.

I would suggest they take that advice and vote “no.”

#### KEEPING PROMISES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, the repeal and replacement of ObamaCare is about keeping promises and being worthy of the American people's trust.

We, for the third time in American history, have unified Republican control of the government: a Republican in the White House and Republican control of the House of Representatives and of the Senate. In the last five campaigns, one out of every four ads was about health care, so it is our turn to lead.

Here is what we know: ObamaCare today is failing. It is failing to meet the promises that were made that people could keep their doctor or keep their plan. It is failing to be affordable for those who see rising premiums, rising deductibles, no choices, no health care at all, and limited access.

As Republicans leading in this Chamber, we are on a rescue mission to save the American people from this disaster and to replace this law with something that works and gets us away from government-centered health care and moves us to patient-centered health care, doctor-centered health care.

You know, we believe in ownership societies where you ought to be able to own your own healthcare plan, own your own decisions about education and how you choose to prosper.

Today, the Rules Committee is contemplating amendments that should excite conservatives with generational changes that will unlock the potential of this great country.

State flexibility, for the first time, we really see the option for States like mine in Florida to step up and say we don't want the Federal Government involved in health care anymore. We want to take control over those who are vulnerable in our communities, and we want to innovate and come up with solutions that meet those challenges.

Work requirements, hardworking people in my district don't understand why they go to work every day but too often they are paying for entitlements for people who are able-bodied, childless, can work, and choose not to. That is wrong.

We are going to take up, on this floor, legislation that I suspect will have a work requirement for able-bodied, childless adults for those States who choose to implement this bold conservative reform.

We also expect that there will be an end to the disaster of Medicaid expansion. Today in America, one out of every four people is on Medicaid. That is absolutely unsustainable. It means three of us have got to pay for the cost of our own health care and then a substantial portion of the cost of someone else's.

By ending Medicaid expansion for nonexpansion States, we put the country back on a path to prosperity—not government-centered health care, individual patient-centered health care where people can choose the plans that best meet their needs.

If we do this, if we meet this challenge with our historic opportunity to

lead, then the American people will know that we are worthy of their trust. We are keeping our word, and we will repeal and replace health care.

# RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 12 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

# AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

# PRAYER

Dr. Tom Smiley, Lakewood Baptist Church, Gainesville, Georgia, offered the following prayer:

In the name that is above every name, in the name of the One by whom all things were created and by whom all things created are sustained, in the name of the One who was crucified for the sins of all people, raised on the third day, and who, upon His return, every knee will bow and every tongue confess is Lord, in the name of Jesus, my Savior and my Lord, today, I ask:

Draw near unto thyself the heart of any in this body who still remain far from You.

Give confidence and courage to all who govern from this House, to be unashamed of the Judeo-Christian ethic, which has led this Nation to prominence and prosperity above all other nations.

And Father, remind all, who by faith trust You that Your love wants what is best for us, Your wisdom knows what is best for us, and Your power will accomplish what is best for us.

In Jesus' name and God's people.

Amen.

# THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

# PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. JEFFRIES led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

# WELCOMING DR. TOM SMILEY

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Tom Smiley, whose compassion and character have made him a true leader in Gainesville and northeast Georgia.

Dr. Smiley grew up in Gumbranch, Georgia, where he received his call to preach. After graduating from Blue Mountain College in Mississippi, Pastor Tom attended Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Columbia Theological Seminary, where he obtained his doctorate in ministry, with an emphasis on marriage and family ministry.

As senior pastor of Lakewood Baptist Church, Dr. Smiley has led the congregation—including my own family—for over 25 years. The vision for Lakewood is to be a regional church that raises up fully devoted followers of Christ who are trained and equipped to love and reach lost people, locally and globally.

In addition to his work at church, Pastor Tom has established himself as a successful writer, authoring three books: "Runaway Lives," "Angels All Around," and "Uncommon Common Sense."

Dr. Smiley is engaged with the Gainesville community at every level, and our neighbors have enjoyed his contributions as a Little League baseball and basketball coach, as well as the work that he does at the community YMCA branch.

Dr. Smiley is my pastor and friend, and in every aspect of his life, he leads with grace and devotion. I am proud to welcome him here to our Nation's Capitol in Washington, D.C.

# ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

# OBAMACARE FAILED THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, ObamaCare has failed the American people destroying jobs. All across South Carolina, premiums have skyrocketed, small-business jobs have been terminated, and our State is now down to a single insurance provider on the exchange. This is not what families were promised 7 years ago.

With the American Health Care Act, House Republicans have delivered on the commitment to give Americans a healthcare system that increases choice, creates jobs, and puts the patient back in control. This bill protects